

EXPEDITION NEWS



November 2007 - Volume Fourteen, Number Eleven

EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 13th year, is the monthly review of significant expeditions, research projects and newsworthy adventures. It is distributed online and to media representatives, corporate sponsors, educators, research librarians, explorers, environmentalists, and outdoor enthusiasts. This forum on exploration covers projects that stimulate, motivate and educate.

TEAM FOLLOWS SHACK'S ENDURANCE ROUTE TO SOUTH POLE

This month, Californian, and veteran Antarctic-adventurer, Doug Stoup will guide a three-man team, 660 miles along Ernest Shackleton's planned 1915 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition route to the South Pole.

Dragging 250-pound sleds over the frozen Antarctic landscape, the three explorers include James Fox, a British real estate developer and photographer, and Richard Dunwoody, one of Britain's most successful jockeys.

The team is hoping to reach the Geographic South Pole using Shackleton's original mapped route – which was never attempted due to the destruction of the *Endurance*.

The journey begins in Cape Town, South Africa, with an overseas flight to an ice runway on the Russian meteorological base, Novolazarevskaya. After acclimatization, the team again takes to the air over Dronning Maud Land (Queen Maud Land in Western Antarctica) to the Shackleton mountain range. Here, trekking through extreme conditions, up and over elevations of 10,000 feet, they will drag everything they need to survive on sleds attached to their bodies.

The team will document the daily challenges to survive high-altitude, sub-zero conditions over crevasse fields and rugged icepack in uncharted territory.

Doug Stoup has traveled, climbed, skied and snowboarded in some of the most remote regions on the planet. He climbed three of the seven summits (Denali, Kilimanjaro and Vinson Massif). Stoup is the first American male to ski to the South Pole; his more recent journeys have included: Anvers Island

EXPEDITION TO COMMEMORATE SCOTT'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Now this is what we call thinking ahead: an expedition to Antarctica to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated Terra Nova Expedition of 1910-12 was announced last month for March 2012. Several seasoned and well-known Antarctic explorers and adventurers were contacted for their assistance and involvement in the expedition.

“Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Dr. Mike Stroud, both famous for previous polar explorations, have agreed to be involved in the expedition,” says Jason Nitz, Australian expedition organizer and team member. “Both Ran and Mike are ardent admirers of Scott and this expedition offers a great opportunity to commemorate what Scott and his men achieved so long ago.”

The goal of the expedition is to commemorate the death of the Polar Party by holding a fitting service at the geographical location of their deaths and to also erect a permanent memorial. If time and planning permits, the site of Oates and Evan's death will also be visited.

Jason Nitz, 35, a resident of Jabiru in Northern Territory Australia, is currently an IT professional working for Rio Tinto, one of the world's largest mining companies. He joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1990 serving on *HMAS Perth* as a member of the Combat Information Center. After leaving the Navy he has held a multitude of jobs, including a helicopter rescue crewman, flight data officer, intelligence officer and currently an IT professional. His interest in Scott originated as a young boy and since then he's harbored a desire to follow in the footsteps of Scott and his men.

Fund raising and sponsorship activities have already begun along with the extensive logistical planning that goes with

SHACK'S ENDURANCE ROUTE *from page 1*

(off the coast of Antarctica); Ama Dablam and Cho Oyu in the Himalayas; and the famed Ice Bike Expedition – a solo test of a prototype bike on Antarctic glacial ice. He also participated in Pole Track – an international North Pole expedition supporting climate change research. (For more information, visit: www.beyondshackleton.com). ▲▲

SCOTT'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY *from page 1*

an expedition of this nature. “There is no intention for this expedition to be a re-enactment of Scott’s Terra Nova Expedition, however to add realism, the expedition members will be unsupported for the duration and will man haul their supplies using Scott Base (NZ) as a staging point. The involvement of the New Zealand, British and Australian governments, and Antarctica New Zealand will play an important part in the expedition,” says Nitz.

Nitz is actively looking for sponsors, especially those related to outdoor adventure activities and expeditions. “We’d also like to hear from relatives of any of Scott’s men as there are plans to include them in the service on Ross Ice Shelf.”

It’s unusual for an expedition to plan more than a year or two in advance, much less five years. In regards to this jump start, Nitz tells *EN*, “We’re looking at making this as fitting as possible for Scott and his men so the planning will take some time due to the interest surrounding the expedition – there has been much interest from the general public as well as other polar travelers. Four years may seem a long time but as we all have full-time jobs, we’ll need this lead-up to make sure we cover everything.” (For more information: Jason Nitz, +61 418 795 846; scott100th@gmail.com). ▲▲

Quote of the Month

*“Death and old age is on the way.
We need to live pretty damn sweet.”*

- Climber Mike Libecki, 34, from Clovis, Calif. and now living in Cottonwood Heights, Utah, speaking at the Mountain Hardwear press conference in Salt Lake last August. He specializes in climbing in places where few other people have been and afterwards, “share my adventures with people not fortunate enough to get there.” He tells *EN* that he tends to be secretive about his upcoming plans. “I do a lot of work. I order maps, and get out magnifying glasses to find places that are untouched and unclimbed.”

EXPEDITION NOTES

Steger Picks Up Two Awards – On Nov. 15, polar explorer Will Steger and Sir Richard Branson will receive the Second Annual Lifetime Achievement Award, presented as part of *National Geographic Adventure* magazine’s celebration of the year’s greatest accomplishments in the world of adventure. Steger will be honored for his Global Warming 101 Expedition to Baffin Island, as well as his lifetime of achievements in exploration. The award ceremony is sponsored by South African Tourism.

“I am deeply honored by these awards but I know we’re not done yet. I will remain steadfast in my commitment to combat global warming through the educational programming and policy work of the Will Steger Foundation,” Steger noted. This is his second award in as many months. Last month he was recognized by The Explorers Club at the 2007 Lowell Thomas Awards Dinner in New York for his journeys to the North Pole, Antarctica and his recent Global Warming 101 project. (For more information: www.nationalgeographic.com). ▲▲

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

If This Tent’s Rocking, Don’t Come Knocking – Used to prayers and silent exclamations of wonder, the foothill of Mt. Everest saw an entirely different spectacle when a group of 15 people burst out into a fist-pumping version of *Knocking on Heaven’s Door* with a Welsh rock star leading the choir.

The world’s highest mountain rocked to what is reportedly the highest gig so far with musicians, adventurers and cancer survivors from five countries staging a concert at the 18,537-ft. (5650 m) high base camp on Oct. 21 to raise funds for the worldwide fight against cancer.

“It was pure bliss, pure peace,” said Christine Allen, who was part of the nearly 40-member expedition that on Oct. 9 began gathering in Kathmandu from Canada, the U.S., Australia, Britain and France for the two-week trek to the base camp.

The project started with Mike Peters, lead singer of the Welsh rock band *The Alarm*, who was diagnosed with cancer in the 90s and survived. Peters teamed up with James Chippendale, a fellow cancer survivor, to found the Love Hope Strength Foundation that is trying to fight cancer worldwide.

The Foundation started with its first concert on the top of the Empire State Building and this month planned the Everest

continued on page 3

gig to buy screening and treatment equipment for the Nepal Cancer Relief Society that is associated with the Bhaktapur Cancer Hospital, Nepal's only full-fledged cancer care center.

They chose Everest because it is one of the most compelling icons and thought to guarantee attracting world attention to the fight against cancer. The Foundation is hoping for recognition in the Guinness Book of World Records for having performed the highest gig at 5650 m. The summit of Mt Everest is (29,028-ft.) 8848 m above sea level.

Besides the thin air and the biting cold, the team also had to cope with stomach viruses, lack of electricity and a snow-storm. Finally, only 15 people were able to undertake the seven-hour trek to the base camp from Gorak Shep and take part in the performance. ▲

EXPEDITION FOCUS

What's in a Name?

A lot, especially when you're a 103-year-old organization and individuals and organizations start to chip away at your name. Members of The Explorers Club begin to seethe when they see references to The Explorers Club that are anything but the venerable New York-based institution they love so much. To protect itself, the Club maintains registrations on some 15 trademarks with the U.S. patent and Trademark Office and its foreign counterparts.

We're not talking about mild word associations, like Ralph Lauren Polo's new Explorer fragrance (what could that be we wonder? The smell of two unwashed men in a base camp tent for 15 days?). The Sheraton Park Tower in London has an Exploration Suite, but that passes muster among the ECAD crowd. What gets most members ready to sharpen their ice axes are outright flagrant, in-your-face violations.

The Club shares an unauthorized name with a day camp in San Francisco, the Explorers Club of Pittsburgh, a similarly named group in Vermont, and a condom Web site for Durex in New Zealand.

Then there's Kevin Costner who, according to *Variety* (June 28), is planning to produce, finance, and voice an animated series called *The Explorers Club*. The twelve-part series is expected to air on the Internet this coming Christmas season. Costner is hoping to build an audience with the four-minute shorts. If they reach the level of popularity he is expecting, he will turn the animated series into a live-action feature film, which he will star in. The series is a collection of spooky little stories about a group of Victorian-era explorers. Each segment finds them traveling to some dark corner of the map.

Perhaps the most unusual namesake is a southeast U.S. band calling themselves, yes, *The Explorers Club*. Band spokesperson Jason Brewer, 26, tells *EN*, "We were looking for a catchy name that sounded like we were all part of the same family. Our inspiration comes from the Bill Murray movie, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*. I researched the real Explorers Club in New York and thought it was kind of a cool name. Since our music is kind of *Beach Boys* and surfy, we thought it fit."

One reviewer says of the group, "The Explorers Club, six hip young cats from Charleston, South Carolina, reincarnate the Beach Boys good vibes and put the choker hold on psych-rock." Brewer says the group has a full-length album on the Dead Oceans label coming out next year.

The head intellectual properties watchdog at The Explorers Club is Ted D. Lee, an attorney at Gunn & Lee in San Antonio, and an advisor to the EC's Legal Committee. As such, he keeps an eye on things for the group's 3,000 members. "Our name is one of our principle assets," he tells *EN*. "We spend a lot of time and effort to keep an eye on the various marks we own.

"When we come across a violation of our trademark, we prefer to work something out instead of instigating court action." Lee recently served a cease and desist letter on Kevin Costner and his partners, demanding they rename their project so as not to infringe upon the Club's rights. "The response by Costner's people was if they proceed with the webisodes, they will either (1) reach an agreement with The Explorers Club, or (2) rename the webisodes," Lee tells *EN*. "They made it clear they would not proceed using Explorers Club without reaching an agreement with The Explorers Club."

The Club is making further headway. The South American Explorers Club was convinced to see the light and changed its name to South American Explorers, although they're still listed by their old name on Google. Also, the former Explorer's Club bar at The Whiteface Lodge in Lake Placid, N.Y., is now the Steak & Stinger, and the EPA's namesake organization is now the Environmental Kids Club.

Usually a rose by any other name is still a rose, but perhaps not in this case, at least not with the Club's legal team on the case.

Channeling George Mallory

During the workweek, Mike Barker, 54, is a mild-mannered risk manager for the city of New Haven, Conn. On the weekends, while he doesn't exactly change in a phone booth and don a cape, he does put on an old wool coat, climbs into

some hobnail boots and straps a Buck Rogers-looking trio of oxygen tanks to his back. It's all in an effort to channel the spirit of George Herbert Leigh Mallory (1886-1924), the legendary Everest mountaineer. To see Barker in person is to recall an earlier time in mountaineering history. With 100 feet of rope wrapped in a standard mountaineer coil and tied with a bowline at his waist, Barker even smells old, somewhat reminiscent of an old attic trunk.

A part-time climbing guide and owner of Climb1Guiding, he was the first Westerner to accomplish a non-stop winter traverse of the Hotaka group of mountains including Yarigadake via the Diakiaretto in Japan, located in the southern part of the Hida Mountains which form a frontier between Nagano and Gifu prefectures (1971). There's also a cliff in Connecticut named the Barker-Daniels Wall (300 feet) named for Barker and his climbing partner Al Daniels who ascended the face's tricky trap rock with minimal protection.

But it's his efforts to commemorate the rich history of climbing that he's most proud about. Barker has meticulously recreated a climbing outfit circa 1920, right down to the primitive oxygen tanks on his back, to communicate to school groups and other gatherings how daring early climbing pioneers were with the equipment they had at the time. "By dressing like these climbing legends, I try to generate new respect for how good these early mountaineers really were," he tells *EN*.

Barker's oxygen set is a copy of Sandy Irvine's Mark V modification of a 1924 British oxygen apparatus and weighs approximately 30 lbs. Its three tanks, which earlier climbers carried simultaneously, each provided about 4 to 6 hours of O₂ for a total of 12 to 18 hours (average total time was 16 hrs. for three tanks, considering leaks and labored breathing).

Barker has appeared in a film shown at the Telluride Film Festival, at the Rubin Museum in New York, was interviewed by WABC-TV in New York, lent his outfit and other old equipment to *National Geographic* for a documentary on K2, and has been involved in live broadcasts of ice and rock climbing on television and radio.

What's next for him? His plate is full: he's working on a draft of a national standard for rope challenge courses; teaches fall protection and rope rescue techniques; and plans to put up more new routes on his namesake Barker-Daniel wall. Plus, of course, he has his day job to contend with. "I hope to help our younger climbing generation learn about and appreciate what and who went before. The climbs that they did in the early years were the 5.14s of their day; someday the 5.14s of today will be the 5.9s of tomorrow. (To reach Mike Barker, contact mbkrclimb@aol.com).

They Can See Clearly Now

Geoffrey Tabin, M.D., is one climber who has made a difference. Originally a highly ranked college tennis player, Tabin got hooked on serious mountaineering while at Yale. Soon he was stealing away to remote peaks at every opportunity. He became the fourth person to climb the Seven Summits and was on the fabled American team that first conquered Everest's foreboding East or Kangshung Face in 1983. He's made other notable ascents in Nepal, Kenya and East Africa, Irian Jaya and the Alps. A self-described adrenaline junkie, he was also part of Oxford's famed *Dangerous Sports Club* that did the very first bungee jump. He wrote an adventure column for *Penthouse Magazine* for many years.

A trip to Nepal in 1985 changed his life. Observing that the Himalayas, because of altitude and other factors, suffered from some of the highest rates of cataract-caused blindness in the world, he decided to specialize in ophthalmology so he could do something about it.

"Most of what I learned in Western medicine wasn't applicable in the Himalayas," he told guests at the Oct. 27 American Alpine Club/New York section dinner in New York.

"I watched people die of things they wouldn't die of in the Western Hemisphere. People were sick because of preventable, treatable illnesses. The blind people of the Himalayas are called a 'mouth with no hands.' They are helpless with white eyes and white hair who need to be lead around as they literally waited to die. Their life expectancy is a third that of their peers. But the one area I knew I could make a difference was in cataract surgery."

Tabin co-founded the Himalayan Cataract Project (HCP), which through a world-class eye care and surgery center in Kathmandu, mobile camps in remote parts of Nepal and by training and empowering local doctors, brings the blessing of restored sight to many who would be fated to blindness. He told the AAC dinner of one instance where two doctors working side-by-side performed 224 cataract surgeries for 12 hours a day for three days.

"Day after day, after being blind for 12 years – mothers who had never seen their children – in one day they could see perfectly with 20/20 vision," Tabin said. Last year, thanks to HCP, over 160,000 cataract surgeries were performed in Nepal versus only a tiny fraction of that when he first visited there. High volume surgical eye camps are now transferring skills to local doctors in Nepal and efforts are underway to expand to Africa, India and China.

Tabin, author of *Blind Corners* (ICS Books, 1993) now works and resides in Utah where he is a Professor and Director

continued on page 5

of Ophthalmology at the University of Utah's Moran Eye Center in Salt Lake City.

Says Phil Erard, chairman of the New York section of the AAC, "Of all the climbers I know, Geoff Tabin is making the most significant impact." (For more information: www.cureblindness.org). ▲

MEDIA MATTERS

They Lived to Tell the Tale – The Lyons Press, an imprint of Globe Pequot Press, is releasing *They Lived to Tell the Tale: True Stories of Modern Adventure from the Legendary Explorers Club*, edited and introduced by Jan Jarboe Russell. The book, the first collection of new stories by members in more than 65 year, features a number of Club members:

- Titanic discoverer Robert Ballard describes a "bad day at the office."
- Naturalist Jim Fowler searches for the Andean condor.
- Marine colonel Matthew Bogdanos aids in the recovery of Iraq's national treasures.
- Dr. Ken Kamler survives disaster on Mount Everest.
- NASA Astronaut Leroy Chiao joins a Russian crew at the International Space Station.
- Mountaineer James Powell discovers how not to take a jungle bath.

The book seeks to define what "exploration" means today. It dusts off the image of the tweedy explorer of old, pipe in hand, regaling his cronies at "the club" with his latest hunting adventure, and provides a modern look at explorers – including several women – with lifelong passions, whether it's for saving the rainforest, protecting the treasures of the Iraqi National Museum, or searching for an important shipwreck thousands of feet beneath the waves. (For more information: www.globepequot.com).

What Happens in Antarctica Stays in Antarctica – Tired of all the cute little penguin movies out there? Funnyman Bob Saget wrote and directed a send-up of these syrupy penguin documentaries called *Farce of the Penguins*. It pairs inspiring wildlife videos with a lewd script. And we mean lewd. Samuel L. Jackson narrates this tale of a penguin and his libidinous pals on a 70-mile trek, driven by lust in search of love but willing to settle for a single night of penguin heat. James Belushi, Christina Applegate and Whoopi Goldberg are among the stars who provide the voices for this hilarious mockumentary.

Parka Posse – *The New York Times* credits early explorers with popularizing cold weather parkas. "... the Inuit created the first anoraks, as they called their insulating jackets made of animal hides, while the explorers Admiral Robert E. Peary and Roald Amundsen adopted the look as they raced to the poles to stake their claims," writes Robert E. Bryan in the *Times' Mens Fashion* magazine (Fall 2007). Peary's yeti-like fur coveralls may have been popular in its day, but he never received the level of exposure generated that parka trendsetters in *Taxi Driver* (1976), and rappers Method Man, Missy Elliott, and Ludacris would receive 100 years later. Even Vice President Dick Cheney, who wore a parka at Auschwitz commemorative ceremonies in 2005, is credited with the current resurgence in popularity of this staple of the exploration set. ▲

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Google Offers \$20M Moon Rover Prizes

Internet giant Google said it will give \$20 million to the first private group to land a roving robot on the lunar surface. The purse is being offered by the X Prize Foundation, which awarded \$10 million in 2005 to a group that included Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen for launching a human into space. In the 1970s, the Soviets launched the only robotic rovers to have negotiated the moon. Budget woes forced NASA this spring to cancel its lunar-rover plan. To win the \$20 million, a vehicle must ramble a quarter-mile and send video back to Earth.

The goals are "incredibly feasible," said Peter Worden, director of NASA's Ames Research Center. "Most of the components could be purchased off the shelf." NASA plans to send astronauts back to the moon by 2020 and establish a lunar research camp, but Worden said the contest doesn't threaten the agency. Such private space exploration "is exactly what we hoped would happen," he said. "NASA is pretty excited about this."

Suunto Crows About Watch on El Cap

Suunto is boasting about its role in a new speed climbing record on El Capitan. Nearly 50 years after the first successful climb of the Nose of El Capitan, Yosemite National Park, Calif., Alexander and Thomas Huber set a new speed-climbing record of 2 hr. 45 min. 45 sec. on Oct. 8.

It took Warren J. Harding, Wayne Merry and George Whitmore 47 days to ascend the 1000 m-high face in 1958, but the two German brothers made the best of a warm autumn to break the previous best time of 2 hr. 48 min. 50 sec. set by Hans Florine and Yuji Hirayama in 2006 by over three minutes.

“Thomas and I live for our sport and therefore we wanted to use the chance to climb faster than anybody else on that route,” said Alexander Huber, 38.

“The nose is the most famous route in the world and El Capitan is the most important rock face in climbing,” Huber said. “It’s just great to be there and do such crazy things like speed climbing.”

Using Suunto Core wristops, the Huber brothers were able to keep a close eye on their time as they raced up the mountain. The Suunto wristops also monitored their altitude as they ascended at a zippy rate of almost 6.1 m per minute.

The Bavarian-born brothers have spent four weeks in Yosemite National Park preparing for the attempt and making numerous dummy runs on the face.

“It’s not only that the climbing is very risky, because we don’t have the time to place lots of protection, but it was also very exhausting. To run up 1000 vertical meters in less than three hours is a tough game,” said Huber.

Alexander and Thomas, 40, had already made one successful attempt on Oct. 4 when they broke Florine’s and Hirayama’s time by a slim 20 seconds. This most recent climb seals the deal. ▲▲

ON THE HORIZON

Sea Stories – On Nov. 17, The Explorers Club will host a day focused on scuba diving, exploration and marine life at its headquarters in Manhattan. Speakers include representatives of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Deep/Quest 2 Expeditions, the New Jersey Historical Divers Association, and the Robert Palmer Blue Holes Foundation.

One interesting topic will be presented by Michael Barrett titled, “Time Bombs of the Pacific: the Impact of World War II Shipwrecks.” Barrett, a National Geographic Society grant recipient, recently returned from the South Pacific, where he conducted an environmental risk assessment of WWII shipwrecks on marine ecosystems. He will explain the potential environmental disaster these ships could have on the reefs of the Pacific. Admission: \$55. (For more information: www.explorers.org). ▲▲

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Advertise in Expedition News – For just 50 cents a word, you can reach an estimated 10,000 readers of America’s only monthly newsletter celebrating the world of expeditions on land, in space, and beneath the sea. Join us as we take a sometimes-irreverent look at the people and projects making Expedition News. Frequency discounts are available. (For more information: blumassoc@aol.com).

Himalaya Climbs and Treks – Five percent discount for Explorers Club members. Climbs and Treks with Dan Mazur and SummitClimb.com - Africa, Himalaya, Aconcagua, Everest Basecamp Treks, Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya Treks and Climbs. Ascents and walks around Tibet, China, Nepal and around the world with our experienced friendly team. Established for 18 years. Novices, and experts are welcome. 360 570 0715, info@SummitClimb.com, www.summitclimb.com.

New LEKI Antishock System – LEKI, the leading international manufacturer of trekking poles, has introduced a Soft Antishock-Lite (SAS-L) System that provides much more comfort along the trail. The impact energy is absorbed directly into the lower shaft. The perfect combination of steel spring and elastomer provides precise synchronization between spring strength and compression – making trekking with a pole more comfortable than ever, reducing stress on the joints, muscles and ligaments. (www.leki.com)

Tights, Tops and Sport Support Bras for Athletes – CW-X Conditioning Web is specifically tuned to provide total support to the key muscle groups and joints of the lower limbs and upper body. Tights and Tops, and the company’s new Sports Support Bras, are made for a wide variety of high-energy activities, including running, fitness walking, hiking, cycling, skiing, snowboarding, track and field, and other fitness activities. It has been worn to the summit of Everest on at least two occasions. (www.cw-x.com). ▲▲